

## DID YOU KNOW?

That in the December 1, 2008 Child Count, 456 students were reported as having Coordinated Service Plans. Of that number, 70.0% are male; 67.8% are in the regular education classroom at least part of the time, while 9.9% are in residential settings and 21.1% are in separate schools; 59.4% are in secondary school (grades 7 to 12); and 42.1% have emotional disturbance.

Source: December 1, 2008 Child Count preliminary data.

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# Student Support Team

## Newsletter

VOLUME III, ISSUE I

FEBRUARY 2009

### Increasing Engagement of *All* Students

Often, we look to the past to improve the present and future. For example, the promising ideas and best practices we learned and implemented in the past can be used in our current initiatives to maximize student learning. Such is the case with cooperative learning and other well-known approaches applied to Positive Behavior Supports (PBS). PBS provides a framework for building a shared culture school-wide in which positive, proactive, consistent and evidence-based approaches increase social competence of students and maximize academic engagement and achievement. Jon Udis of Vermont School House Seminars has developed a workshop entitled "Applying School-Wide PBS in the Classroom" in which he models a number of strategies to integrate school-wide expectations into the daily life of classrooms and increase engagement of *all* students.

During a recent presentation of this workshop, educators from several schools that have implemented the school-wide level of Positive Behavior Supports for *all* students practiced a variety of strategies that they could use in their classrooms. Jon modeled the use of T charts to describe in students' own words what an expected behavior "looks like" and "sounds like". In this way, students can visualize and have language in order to practice, receive specific acknowledgement, and provide positive peer-to-peer feedback on the behavior. Modeling expected behaviors in small cooperative groups rather than as a whole class promotes each student's engagement and use of social skills through positive interdependence. By rotating through the tasks of using the skill, coaching and observing, each small group member models the behavior as well as gives feedback. Behavior management techniques such as the provision of frequent, timely, and specific feedback to students using expected behaviors, and the ignore-attend-acknowledge sequence to address student behavior that is not meeting expectations, are effective approaches used in school-wide PBS environments.

Cooperative learning strategies such as *think-pair-share*, *mix-freeze-pair*, and *numbered heads together* level the cognitive playing field for learners of different processing speeds. Partner reading activities with *rotating roles* and *question prompts*, provide students with opportunities to practice pro-social language. These structured methods for student responses send a message that "everyone's voice counts" and contribute to an environment that maximizes student participation.

Importance of the use of language by adults was explored during the workshop. Carefully crafted questions that promote reflective, authentic discussions along with "wait time" of 15 seconds before students respond increase both participation and quality of responses. A "wait time" of 5 seconds after a student responds followed by a question that promotes continued student dialog increases peer conversation and deeper thinking. The words that we use to acknowledge student responses can either promote students' willingness to participate in class discussions or shut down discussions for many students in the group. Strategies were discussed for delivering effective directions and checking to be sure students understand directions. Visual signals such as "Fist-to-Five" in which students show by the number of fingers held up whether they completely understand, have clarifying questions, or need individual help with the directions are effective and efficient strategies.

The expertise that educators acquire over time provides an array of positive and proactive approaches that, when selected thoughtfully and intentionally, are responsive to students' needs. Jon Udis reinforced for his workshop participants the understanding that when these effective strategies are part of a Positive Behavior Supports school-wide systematic approach, students experience success in academic and social learning, and both students and adults thrive in a shared culture of positive expectations.

~ Carol Randall & Bev Heise

## **Data Analysis and Reporting Team Update:**

### **2007 - 2008 Annual Performance Report:**

The Vermont Special Education statewide Annual Performance Report was submitted to OSEP on February 1. The Annual Performance Report is available on the Vermont Department of Education (DOE) website at:

[http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm\\_sped/data\\_reports\\_pubs.html](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_sped/data_reports_pubs.html)

The Annual Performance Report contains 2007 - 2008 school year updates on all 20 indicators contained in the State Performance Plan submitted to OSEP on December 1, 2005.

### **2007 - 2008 Local Annual Performance Reports and December 1, 2008 Child Count Reporting:**

The local Annual Performance Reports for 2007 - 2008 will be available to Supervisory Unions by April 1. Dave and Mike are currently scheduling the presentations on Local Reporting of Annual Performance Report data and the 12/01/2008 Child Count with the regional Special Education Administrator groups. The presentation will provide a review of the statutory context for the local reporting requirements, and an overview of the local Child Count and APR data reports that will be published on the (DOE) web site in June. Each Administrator will receive a report customized to reflect the actual data for their Supervisory Union.

We look forward to sharing this information with the regions on the following scheduled dates:

Northeast/Central- Friday, April 10  
Chittenden- Friday, May 1, Afternoon.  
Northwest-To Be Determined.  
Southwest- Friday, May 1, Morning  
Southeast- To Be Determined.

### **Post-Secondary Outcomes Survey for Students Exited in 2007 - 2008:**

The Student Support Team is required under the reauthorized IDEA to annually survey all IEP students 14 years of age or greater who have graduated, aged out or dropped out of school ("leavers"). To implement the survey, phone and mail contact information for all leavers (about 20 per Supervisory Union) will be needed again for the 2007 - 08 school year.

By the end of March, each SU will be mailed, with detailed instructions, a "Post-Secondary Survey Address and Phone Number Data Collection Form." This pre-populated form will provide a list of each SU's 2007 - 08 leavers and provide space to update any changes to an exiting student's phone number or address.

We anticipate that we will begin contacting students to complete the survey in May.

### **2008 - 2009 Parent Involvement Survey:**

As part of the Annual Performance Report, we are continuing to implement the Parent Involvement Survey. We will be utilizing the same survey instrument from the National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring.

We anticipate that the 2008 - 2009 survey will be mailed out between mid-May and the end of the school year.

To increase response rates, we are working with the survey vendor to determine the exact dates of mailing so case managers and Supervisory Union staff can alert parents of the survey's arrival. Please contact Dave Phillips at 828-5936 or [david.phillips@state.vt.us](mailto:david.phillips@state.vt.us), if you would like additional survey information to include in SU, district or school-level communiqués to parents before the survey is sent.

### **December 1, 2008 Child Count:**

This year's Child Count cycle has been a bit difficult. A few SU's had problems getting their data to us; this was exacerbated by apparent delays in the mail system. As a consequence, we reported partial data to the US Department of Education for the February 1 deadline, and will be resubmitting when those data are finalized. We also missed the window for the February load into the Education Data Warehouse, but the data should be loaded after Town Meeting Day.

The patch to the Child Count application, which will correct the mistaken autism errors folks received in December, should be available shortly. Mike will send an email when it is available, providing information on where to find the patch. Applying the patch is necessary to prevent the same errors from popping up in June when you are reporting your exiting students from the December 2, 2008 to June 30, 2009 period. A gentle reminder that the exiting data is due to Mike by July 15, 2009.

Mike will be reviewing the December 1 data for problems, and plans to fax out Final Verification Reports before the end of February. The report must be signed and mailed back to Mike, as it is the source document for Proportionate Share grants.

Dave and Mike will be making the rounds to all the Regional Meetings starting in April to talk about Child Count and the Annual Performance Report, and to answer any questions you have about data. We look forward to seeing you there!

**~ Dave Phillips & Mike Bailey**

# Student Support Team— Save the Date



## March

**Overview of Coordinated Services Planning for Children with Complex Needs and Their Families-Interactive Workshop about the Who, What and Why of CSP** Lyndonville, Montpelier, Williston March 4th 1:00-4:30 Register 10 days in advance: <http://www.vtcsp.blogspot.com> or <http://www.vthec.org>

### ALLTech Assistive Technology Regional Workshops

Lyndon State College- Burke Mountain Room March 9th. Please call to register 1.866.688.4573 x 150 and for up-to-date information <http://vermontassistivetechology.edublogs.org>

### ALLTech Assistive Technology Regional Workshops

Chamber of Commerce Berlin March 10th. Please call to register 1.866.688.4573 x 150 and for up-to-date information <http://vermontassistivetechology.edublogs.org>

### ALLTech Assistive Technology Regional Workshops

CCV Rutland March 11th. Please call to register 1.866.688.4573 x 150 and for up-to-date information <http://vermontassistivetechology.edublogs.org>

### ALLTech Assistive Technology Regional Workshops

Austine School-Brattleboro March 12th. Please call to register 1.866.688.4573 x 150 and for up-to-date information <http://vermontassistivetechology.edublogs.org>

### AUTISM & SPECIAL EDUCATION WORKSHOPS ON VIT

Working Together: To Support Best Practices and Make a Difference in the Lives of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder **March 17, 2009-Toolkit for Social Survival -VIT LOCATIONS:** St Albans, Lyndon, Newport, Williston, WRJ, Montpelier, Rutland, Brattleboro Contact: [info@vthec](mailto:info@vthec) or 802-479-3155; \$75.00 per session Register on our website: <http://www.vthec.org>



## March

**Working Together To Support Best Practices and Make A Difference In The Lives of Children with Disabilities: A Year-Long Course of Study for Special Educators and Related Service Providers March 24, 2009- FBA and BIP--The Must Do "Acronyms" for Behavioral Intervention VIT LOCATIONS:** St Albans, Lyndon, Newport, Williston, WRJ, Montpelier, Rutland, Brattleboro Contact: [info@vthec](mailto:info@vthec) or 802-479-3155; \$75.00 per session Register on our website: <http://www.vthec.org>

## April

**Deafblind Advisor Training Project April 6, 2009**

**State Phone Conference VT – 1:00 - 2:00**

To register: Contact Cheryl Harvey at [nec@perkins.org](mailto:nec@perkins.org),

### Creating Effective Coordinated Services Plans-VIT

Lyndonville, Montpelier, Williston April 7th 1:30-4:30 Register 10 days in advance: <http://www.vtcsp.blogspot.com> or <http://www.vthec.org>

### AUTISM & SPECIAL EDUCATION WORKSHOPS ON VIT

Working Together: To Support Best Practices and Make a Difference in the Lives of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder **April 7, 2009 So He's Having a Tantrum! What Do I Do Now? VIT LOCATIONS:** St Albans, Lyndon, Newport, Williston, WRJ, Montpelier, Rutland, Brattleboro Contact: [info@vthec](mailto:info@vthec) or 802-479-3155; \$75.00 per session Register on our website: <http://www.vthec.org>

**Working Together To Support Best Practices and Make A Difference In The Lives of Children with Disabilities: A Year-Long Course of Study for Special Educators and Related Service Providers April 28, 2009**

Paraeducator Training, Support and Supervision **VIT LOCATIONS:** St Albans, Lyndon, Newport, Williston, WRJ, Montpelier, Rutland, Brattleboro Contact: [info@vthec](mailto:info@vthec) or 802-479-3155; \$75.00 per session Register on our website: <http://www.vthec.org>

**Training, Professional Development & Learning Opportunities  
Agency of Human Services**

Many trainings, along with on-line registration, can be found at <http://humanservices.vermont.gov/professional-development>

## Focused Monitoring Update

We wanted to update the you on our activities since our Focused Monitoring Stakeholder Group meeting in May 2008. The group unanimously selected indicator 5 (and 6) from the State Performance Plan (SPP) ~ Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). We identified 5 supervisory unions (SU) to be monitored and they were notified in June 2008. Each Supervisory Union (SU) has established an LPT or Local Planning Team to support the SU in this endeavor. The LPT's role in the Focused Monitoring process is to review the Supervisory Union data, plan a formal response to Vermont Department of Education (DOE), ensure that the Focused Monitoring Team has access to all needed information during the on-site visit and plan improvement activities regarding any findings related to the indicators and non-compliance. Each LPT has been meeting periodically to develop *Portfolios of Evidence* to submit to the Focused Monitoring Team prior to the visit. This portfolio will include some local demographic information, an analysis of data (either provided by DOE or identified locally) to identify areas of strength, areas that need further investigation and a review of organizational and instructional practices. The LPT will also plan the schedule for the on-site visit and the parent forum.

We are currently putting the finishing touches on our newly developed Focused Monitoring Manual, which we will continue to review and revise as necessary. We have distributed draft copies to all LPT's and have solicited feedback from the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators (VCSEA) and the Northeast Regional Resource Center (NERRC).

We were fortunate to spend a half day with Katie Shepherd Ed.D, one of our stakeholders and professor at UVM, on Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis to get a better understanding of the "story behind the numbers". We spent quite a bit of time discussing the differences between Qualitative and Quantitative Research which was very helpful since a lot of our data comes from interviews (qualitative data).



Bailey & Serena Hanrahan

### Vermont Focused Monitoring Team Contacts

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(802) 828-5126

### Dates of Focused Monitoring Visits:

Windsor Southwest Supervisory Union:  
January 11-15, 2009

Orange Southwest Supervisory Union:  
February 2-6, 2009

Windsor Southeast Supervisory Union:  
March 9-13, 2009

Windham Central Supervisory Union:  
March 23-27, 2009

Orleans Central Supervisory Union:  
April 6-10, 2009

### SAVE THE DATE:

Next Stakeholder Meeting:

May 27<sup>th</sup> beginning at 9:00

Location to be determined



## **New Vermont Transition Resource ~ On Line Learning Module ~ January 2009**

The Transition Coalition, in collaboration with the Vermont Department of Education (DOE), has developed the Vermont Transition Resource. This Vermont-specific Best Practices in Transition Planning online learning module includes case studies, information regarding Indicator 13, activities, and resources. If you are from Vermont, and logged into the Transition Coalition site, you will see this new online training module. This material is only for Transition Coalition account holders from Vermont. You will be asked to create an account to view these modules. The reason for this is to allow you to be able to work on it (it's very interactive) and save your work each time. When you log in again, you pick up where you left off. Think of this module as a short online course (can take up to 4 hours to complete). This is among the most intensive online technical assistance the DOE offers for transition planning in special education (we also have 5 online courses through Kansas University).

[VT Transition Professional Development Resource<sup>2</sup>](#)

<http://transitioncoalition.org/transition/index.php>

This information can all be found on the TRIPSCY website as well. The easiest way to find TRIPSCY is to "GOOGLE it". It will be the first item it pulls up or go to

<http://www.uvm.edu/~cdci/tripscy/?Page=TransHome.html&SM=TransSubmenu.html>

Feel free to send any questions or suggestions for improving the content my way. [John.spinney@state.vt.us](mailto:John.spinney@state.vt.us)

~ John Spinney

## **Putting the Functional Back into Functional Behavior Assessment**

The intrigues of human behavior are many. Yet, within this complexity are knowable and measurable strategies that describe what we do and why we do it. Arguably, all behavior can be traced back to serving one of two functions; that being the attempt to obtain something or avoid something. The simplicity of this concept is the key to not only understanding behavior but figuring out our roles in helping students with challenging behaviors. In this way, we create plans that lead students to make choices for themselves that satisfy the function of their behavior by using more socially accepted strategies.

As part of Vermont's Positive Behavior Support system, Ken Kramberg and I just completed three regional training sessions attempting to take the mystery and misperceived high level of complexity out of Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Planning. Recognizing that there are different levels of FBA and Analysis, the goal of these sessions was to describe a basic process that is best accomplished by school personnel without reliance on outside expertise. To accomplish this we offered an approach that is both efficient in terms of time and personnel as well as effective for helping our students exhibit behaviors consistent with school expectations.

Neither rocket science nor magic, FBA is based on researched practice that engages those working directly with the student

along with the student in the creation of an individual behavior plan leading to self motivated pro-social behavior. To accomplish this, a school based team follows an outline describing what adults will do differently to help reshape the student's behavior.

FBA is founded on the following set of beliefs:

Behavior is predictable.

Behavior is changeable.

Human behavior occurs within an environmental context, not in a vacuum.

Human behavior is learned and can be taught by manipulating aspects of the environmental context--Behavior is a function of the environment

The three regional trainings were received with enthusiasm and have resulted in requests to offer more sessions. The Vermont State PBS leadership team will continue to offer this foundational training as well as more advanced FBA training.

To find out more about the Vermont PBS effort, go to <http://www.pbsvermont.org/>

~ Richard Boltax

## RESOURCES

### Scientifically Based Education Resources

The Access Center (K-8)

<http://www.k8accesscenter.org>

Research in Special Education: Scientific Methods and Evidence-Based Practices

[ideapractices.org/ps/Final\\_Manuscript-Scientific\\_Research\\_in\\_Special\\_Education\\_R3.pdf](http://ideapractices.org/ps/Final_Manuscript-Scientific_Research_in_Special_Education_R3.pdf)

National Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports website—<http://www.pbis.org>

The Florida Center for Reading Research  
<http://www.fcrr.org>

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities Research Center website at  
<http://research.nichcy.org>

Resources supporting Progress Monitoring Research:

The National Center on Student Progress Monitoring information can be accessed at:  
<http://www.studentprogress.org>

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has funded the Research Institute on Progress Monitoring to develop a system of progress monitoring to evaluate effects of individualized instruction on access to and progress within the general education curriculum.  
<http://www.progressmonitoring.org>

National Research Center on Learning Disabilities  
This resource includes a learning disabilities resource kit on determination procedures and Rtl. <http://www.nrcdd.org>

The Center on Instruction provides information on scientifically based research and information on K-12 instruction in reading, math, science, special education, and English language learning. <http://www.centeroninstruction.org>

The Institute of Education Achievement at the University of Oregon has continuously updated research on scientifically-based instructional practices. <http://www.idea.uoregon.edu>

The IRIS Center, funded by the U.S Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), creates course enhancement materials for college faculty who teach pre-service personnel and for professional development trainers who conduct in-service trainings. The Web site materials are designed to better prepare professionals to work with students with disabilities in general education classrooms.  
<http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu>

Center for Early Literacy Learning (CELL)  
<http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org/>

### The Website for the Stern Center :

<http://www.sterncenter.org/>

<http://www.getATstuff.com> is an online "classifieds" where you can find new and used **Assistive Technology (AT)** devices for sale or donation. Residents of Vermont & all of New England can post an AT or purchase an AT.

### Center for Implementing Technology in Education

<http://www.CITEd.org>

See the Online Events page on **SchoolsMovingUp** for future training events at <http://www.schoolsmovingup.net/onlineevents>

### Vermont Department of Education

<http://education.vermont.gov/>

The **regional school calendar summary** for 2008-2009 has been posted on the Department's Web site --  
[http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/directories/school\\_calendars\\_09.html](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/directories/school_calendars_09.html)

If you need information about **human services**, log onto <http://www.screendoor.vermont.gov> or call 211

### Weekly Field Memo is Now Online!

The DOE Weekly Field Memo is on the Department of Education web site at

[http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/field\\_memo.html](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/field_memo.html)

Field Memos and the corresponding attachments are available for download. For Field Memo information three months or older, please contact Jill Remick, 828-3154 or [jill.remick@state.vt.us](mailto:jill.remick@state.vt.us). Weekly Field Memo items in **RED** indicate a legal requirement

### New Resources from OSEP

The US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has announced a new addition to the *OSEP Tool Kit on Teaching and Assessing Students With Disabilities (Tool Kit)*. As reported by Judy L. Shanley, Ph.D., Education Program Specialist; "The *Tool Kit* addendum focuses on universal design for learning (UDL). UDL is a framework for designing educational environments that help students engage in learning to increase knowledge and skills. The *Tool Kit* includes information and resources to support the implementation of UDL and is useful for policymakers, education personnel and parents to implement UDL strategies and practices. This new addition is available at <http://www.osepideasthatwork.org/> and CDs will be available shortly through ED Pubs <http://edpubs.ed.gov/> "

## New Resources

The National School Boards Association (NSBA) released a new report, *A New Era in Education: Redefining the Federal Role for the 21st Century*. The paper recommends a different role for the federal government in education, including some recommendations for the new President and his education team. Additionally, the paper identifies where the federal government must immediately direct its emphasis and involvement pending the transition to this new federal role in leading the national effort to define and develop a consensus on a 21st century education. To download the report, go to:

<http://www.nsba.org/MainMenu/Advocacy/FederalRole.aspx>

- NSBA has also released a new report on AYP. The report, *An Analysis of State AYP Results for 2007-08*, can be downloaded from:

<http://www.nsba.org/MainMenu/Advocacy/FederalLaws/NCLB/AYPAnalysis.aspx>

- The Center on Education Policy (CEP) released a new report that examines how classroom practices have been influenced by NCLB and related state policies in Rhode Island. Drawn from classroom observations and interviews, the report sheds new light on how teachers, principals, and administrators have responded to the federal school accountability law. The report, *Lessons from the Classroom Level: Federal and State Accountability in Rhode Island*, found that the high-performing schools in the study and their school districts seemed to have the greatest alignment between curriculum and state standards. Teachers and administrators interviewed for the study acknowledged pressure to “teach to the test” by focusing on specific content or skills included on the state test. The report can be downloaded from the CEP website at <http://www.cep-dc.org> under “What’s New.”

- Washington DC’s public television station, WETA, operates a number of websites that provide helpful information to parents, teachers and other school personnel.

1. <http://www.LDOnLine.org> - LD OnLine provides accurate information about learning disabilities and ADHD to over 200,000 people each month. The site features hundreds of helpful articles, multimedia, first-person essays, and children’s writing and artwork. Monthly advice columns by noted experts, active forums, a comprehensive resource directory, and a Yellow Pages referral directory help parents, teachers, and people with learning disabilities decide what to do.

2. <http://www.ReadingRockets.org> - ReadingRockets.org is a national multimedia project that looks at how young children learn to read, why so many struggle, and what we can do to help them. The website includes an archive of articles, professional development webcasts, interviews with children’s authors, a daily headline service, two blogs, and much more. ReadingRockets.org also encompasses television programs produced for PBS, including *A Tale of Two Schools* and the *Launching Young Readers* series.

3. <http://www.AdLit.org> - AdLit.org is a national multimedia project that offers resources for parents and educators of struggling readers and writers in grades 4-12. The site includes research-based articles, instructional material for classroom teachers, an Ask the Experts feature, blogs by a librarian and children’s book reviewer, tips for parents, recommendations, exclusive interviews with top authors, and a free monthly e-newsletter.

4. <http://www.ColorinColorado.org> - ColorinColorado.org is an award-winning bilingual website for parents and educators of English language learners. The website offers Spanish-speaking parents a wealth of information in their native language and gives teachers the information they need to be more effective in working with children for whom English is a second language.

5. <http://www.BrainLine.org> - BrainLine.org is a national multimedia project that provides information and resources on preventing, treating, and living with traumatic brain injury. The site includes a series of webcasts, an electronic newsletter, and an extensive outreach campaign. BrainLine.org serves anyone whose life has been affected by TBI: people with brain injury, their families, professionals in the field, and anyone else in a position to help prevent or ameliorate the toll of TBI.

6. <http://www.LearningStore.org> - LearningStore.org offers educational videos, books, and software for teachers, parents, and kids. All products are carefully reviewed by education experts.

## Assistive Technology

### Series of Three Workshops

*Attend just one or two, or the whole series!*

*Please Note: Registration is Required for Each Workshop!*

**Presented by:** David Kay, Prentke Romich Company

## Augmentative Communication Training Seminar

*This course will focus on the Unity language program available in PRC's Vantage and Vanguard communication devices. Participants will be introduced to basic device operations to select and customize vocabulary and will learn the functions of the Unity icons. **Each participant will need a Vantage or Vanguard device, or a laptop computer loaded with the current demonstration software from [www.prentrom.com/downloads](http://www.prentrom.com/downloads). Seating is limited.** For ASHA members this seminar is approved for 0.5 CEUs (Introductory level, Professional area).*

**Friday, March 12, 2009 8:30-3:30 p.m.**

For above workshop only, please register by calling 1-800-848-8008 or by visiting [www.prentrom.com/training/regional](http://www.prentrom.com/training/regional) (search VT).

**Presented by:** Eileen Haddon, Assistive Technology Access Specialist, VATP

## Overlay Maker and IntelliKeys Keyboard

*Learn to use software overlays already published for popular software programs. Also, learn how one button can be used to enter a complete word, sentence or website address. Use Overlay Maker to create basic communication boards and games.*

**Thursday, April 23, 2009 1:00-4:00 p.m.**

**Presented by:** Dan Gilman, Assistive Technology Access Specialist, VATP and Chris Cichoski-Kelly, Assistive Technology Director, VFN

## Text Reading Software

*Experience what it's like to have text read aloud using popular text reading software. Examples of text in alternative formats will be explored. Bring your laptop to install a 30-day trial of Kurzweil 3000, or Texthelp Read & Write Gold, or use one of our computers.*

**Thursday, May 14, 2009 1:00-4:00 p.m.**

*The location for all three workshops will be in Vermont Family Network's conference room in Suite 240, 600 Blair Park, Williston, Vermont 05495*

**Free workshops for parents, professionals, and the community.**

To register or request accommodations, please

call: 1-802-876-5315 or toll free in VT 1-800-800-4005,

email: [info@vtn.org](mailto:info@vtn.org), or print out registration form on the

web: [www.VermontFamilyNetwork.org](http://www.VermontFamilyNetwork.org)

*Vermont Family Network is the merged organization of Vermont Parent Information Center (VPIC) and Parent to Parent of Vermont.*





## Save the Date!



### 4th Annual Working with Youth Conference

Friday, May 15, 2009

Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center

Burlington, VT

#### FEATURING:

Keynote by Jaiya John, who is the founder and executive director of Soul Water Rising, a human relations mission devoted to compassion and understanding. His poetic and passionate presentation will inspire and energize. For more information go to [www.soulwater.org](http://www.soulwater.org).

Exciting workshops to offer knowledge, skills, and strategies to build the competencies of youth service workers, volunteers, and others who support young people.

Youth Worker Award presented by the Children and Family Council for Prevention Programs.

Resource Fair including information tables and book vendor.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Conference brochure will be available in March.

For more information, contact Kreig Pinkham at [kreigpinkham@comcast.net](mailto:kreigpinkham@comcast.net) or Ashley Amsden at [wwy@robie.info](mailto:wwy@robie.info) or call 802-948-2435.

*This year the Vermont BEST Team has joined efforts with the planning committee to combine the annual Vermont Alternative Educators conference with the offerings of the Working with Youth conference.*

*The conference committee is also working with Vermont's Youth and Transition SAMHSA Grant to ensure that transition-aged youth have access to services conducted by a skilled workforce. TA and network opportunities are available on conference day.*



## **Regional Consultant Program Adventure Day 2009**

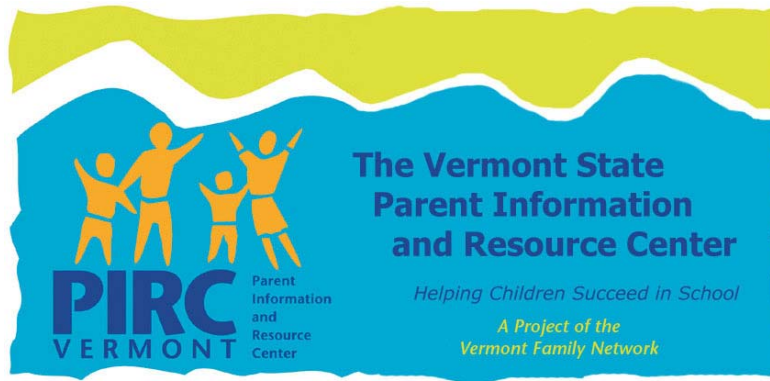
Adventure Day is a field day event for students in fourth through twelfth grade that provides the students with the opportunity to meet and mingle with peers who are hard of hearing. This year the event is scheduled for May 21<sup>st</sup> and will take place at Lotus Lake, an outdoor education facility in Williamstown. Students participate in environmental exploration, group games, problem solving activities and discussions regarding technology, academic strategies and self advocacy strategies. The students meet and interact with adult role models who have faced similar challenges.

This event is offered at no cost to participants, thanks to Vermont Department of Education grant funds and Vermont Center fundraising efforts. If you know of a student with a hearing loss who you believe would benefit from this event, please be in touch with the Vermont Center consultant who covers your area. For a list of the consultants, contact Terry Keegan at 254-3929 or [tkeegan@vcdhh.org](mailto:tkeegan@vcdhh.org)

**~ Terry Keegan,  
Vermont Center for Deaf & Hard of Hearing**



**Solid Foundation Program Offered Through the Vermont Parent  
Information Resource Center:  
(PIRC VT)**



**Solid Foundation** improves student achievement through parent engagement. This web-based program is grounded in effective, research based, proven strategies. A study of schools implementing **Solid Foundation** program for building a school community, published by the Harvard Family Research Project, found that the gain on state assessment tests demonstrated by these schools over a two year period was nearly double that of a control group of schools with identical beginning scores. The process of service and support, provided through the Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC), is tailored to the resources and needs of each school.

**Solid Foundation** is a comprehensive parent engagement program developed by the Academic Development Institute. The goal of this program is to “improve student’s learning and school success by informing, equipping, and empowering parents to enhance their children’s learning at home, support their children’s learning at school, and make decisions about their children’s learning and schooling.”

PIRC Vermont is offering a one time \$1,000 stipend for the first ten schools to pilot Solid Foundation in Vermont. This money is earmarked to help support increasing parental involvement and may be used for: childcare so that parents can attend a training workshop, food for a school-sponsored function, transportation costs to aid underrepresented parent who may not usually attend, or even provide gas card

incentives to parents who agree to participate! This money may also be used to create or update a Parent Resource Center in your school (ranging from a rack to a room of resources), or to purchase books/DVD’s for training purposes. Printing expenses associated with fees for creating a Volunteer Resource Manual, or invitations for parents to attend school functions may be a way for your school to utilize these funds.

For more information about this opportunity to increase parental involvement or any of the other training opportunities and services offered FREE of charge by PIRC VT, please contact the Director, Kathleen Kilbourne at 876-5315 ext. 244 or visit our website at [www.pircvermont.org](http://www.pircvermont.org).

We look forward to working collaboratively with schools and all families.

~ **Gayle DiMasi**

Family-Focused Parent Involvement Coordinator  
The Vermont State Parent Information and Resource Center  
600 Blair Park Road Suite 240  
Williston VT 05495  
(800)800-4005 ext. 211  
[www.pircvermont.org](http://www.pircvermont.org)

***Vermont Freemasons C.A.R.E. Training  
(Comprehensive Assessment & Recovery Effort)  
March 24, 25 & 26, 2009***

This intensive three-day training, which is free to schools, helps educators to implement a team approach in identifying and responding to factors that contribute to a student's behavior or inability to learn such as bullying, substance abuse, depression and violence. Participants leave with a specific plan for behavioral interventions and a system for helping students that they can implement in their schools.

A brochure and save the date card are attached, and contain more details about the event. Groups can register online at:

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=dlkmvmGijfBgHeI3w6dVrBA\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=dlkmvmGijfBgHeI3w6dVrBA_3d_3d)



## Communication Corner

### STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM



Grady Ross Souliere  
A.K.A. "The little Man"

### Upcoming Deadlines

**BEST/Act 230 Update Report      3/6/09**

"The way we communicate with others  
and with ourselves ultimately determines  
the quality of our lives"

~Tony Robbins